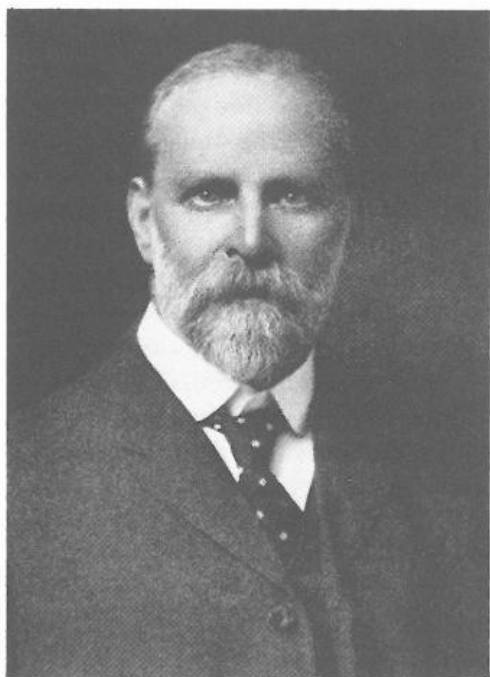
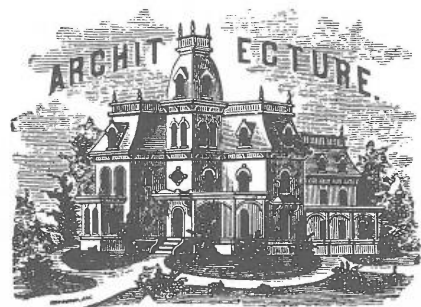


# A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine



**Henry Vaughan**  
**1845-1917**

The architecture of Henry Vaughan in Maine is not extensive, comprising only one house, three churches, and a trio of buildings for Bowdoin College. Yet this handful of works includes some of the more important and most engaging designs by an architect who is credited with initiating the last phase of the Gothic Revival in America.

The details of Vaughan's early life in England unfortunately remain sketchy, and even during his years of established practice in Boston this diffident and retiring bachelor avoided the sort of publicity that most architects would have welcomed. He was born near Liverpool in 1845 and was educated at Dollar Academy in Scotland, but it is not known what formal architectural training he received, if any. By about 1867, however, he was working for George Frederick Bodley, a church architect for whom Vaughan eventually became head draftsman.

Bodley's importance for English architecture is that he led a revolt against the Ruskinian polychromy and non-English sources of the Victorian Gothic as practiced by architects like William Butterfield and George Edmund Street. Like Pugin, Bodley desired to return English Gothic to its roots prior to Henry VIII's break with Rome and the later introduction of Renaissance styles, and to recreate the spirit of the Decorated and Perpendicular periods. His churches were noted for their scholarly restraint, and, as an advocate of the Arts and Crafts revival and patron of William Morris and other Pre-Raphaelites, Bodley oversaw the design of all the furniture, altar fittings, and even the clerical gowns, which were often manufactured by him.

Vaughan shared Bodley's religious and aesthetic philosophy, and when he emigrated to America in 1881, it was as Bodley's emissary. Specifically, he was sent to build a chapel for an Anglican order of nuns in Boston, but more generally Vaughan sought to fulfill Bodley's "hope and belief that new world Gothic would take deep root, and flourish as it had done only in England in the middle ages."<sup>1</sup> In short, the work that Vaughan did in the subsequent three and a half decades might be classified as "Bodley in America."

When Bodley sent Vaughan to build a chapel for the Sisters of St. Margaret on Boston's Louisburg Square (1882-83), it is believed that he sailed on the packet boat "Atlantic Clipper," owned by William Glidden of Newcastle. Although it has been suggested that the architect and the merchant may have met in England, rather than on shipboard,<sup>2</sup> Vaughan's first church — St. Andrew's, Newcastle of 1883 (Figure 1) — was commissioned by Glidden. But, having designed St. Margaret's, as well as having done a rood screen and choir stalls for St. Stephen's Church in Providence, Rhode Island, Vaughan was already a logical choice for High Church Episcopalians in New England who desired something more English than the Romanesque of Henry Hobson Richardson or the Victorian Gothic of Ware & Van Brunt or Cummings & Sears.



Figure 1. St. Andrew's Church, Newcastle, c. 1885 view (MHPC).

As a scholarly evocation of a half-timbered church from 16th-Century rural England, St. Andrew's was quite unlike any other church in northern New England at the time. Although one can point to English examples upon which it might have been based (it is very similar to St. Peter's, Molverley, Shropshire, which Bodley may have restored in 1879), St. Andrew's importance lies in that it set the pattern for many of Vaughan's subsequent parish churches, as well as established an English model with which the Episcopal Church in New England could identify.

The construction cost of \$4,000 and Vaughan's statement that the church was decorated "in a quiet and simple manner"<sup>3</sup> notwithstanding, the interior of St. Andrew's gives an impression of richness (Figure 2). This is almost entirely the result of applied decoration: the exposed rafters are painted olive with red



Figure 2. St. Andrew's Church, Interior view. (Photo Jim Lewis)

painting, while the ceiling and chancel walls are stenciled with Tudor roses, floral wreaths encircling the sacred monograms "IHS" and "A," and an abstract floriated design that recalls Morris wallpapers. Curiously, the vestry was apparently unwilling to fund the stenciling, and Vaughan executed it all himself. Even when compared with his two masterpieces — the chapels at St. Paul's and Groton Schools, St. Andrew's remains one of Vaughan's most thoroughly satisfying works.

Vaughan's work at St. Andrew's did not go unnoticed in the Diocese of Maine, and in 1885 he created a red sandstone altar rail and pulpit for St. Luke's Cathedral in Portland which are among his more original decorative designs.<sup>4</sup> In 1887 Vaughan (who was singled out by the diocesan periodical as an architect "who has made church decoration a special study")<sup>5</sup> painted the Cathedral's chancel walls.

During Vaughan's early years in America he completed the influential chapel for St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire (1886-94) — often cited as the first landmark of the "Modern" phase of the Gothic Revival, but his commissions were relatively few. This was in large part due to his adherence to old-fashioned methods (his Boston office never had more than a handful of assistants) and his refusal to solicit work. Thus, two other Maine church commissions came to him by way of his reputation as an architect who could provide a dignified design that would meet the demands of Anglo-Catholic parishes.

St. James in Old Town, built 1892-94, is somewhat larger than St. Andrew's, seating 190 congregants, and costing slightly more (\$5,050),<sup>6</sup> but it is quite a bit simpler. While St. James has a similar window treatment, as well as a half-timbered porch, it is covered with shingles and is an exercise in understatement.

Maine had to wait until the consecration in 1902 of St. Mary's-by-the-Sea in Northeast Harbor to experience a fully realized Vaughan church of the kind that made him one of America's most respected ecclesiastical architects (Figure 3). This granite and half-timbered church, with its crenellated tower over the crossing, replaced a wooden church of 1882 which had been built at the urging of the Bishop of Albany, William Croswell Doane, a High Church leader and one of the founders of the summer colony at Northeast Harbor. And it was Bishop Doane (the son of the architecturally-conscious Bishop George Washington Doane, patron of both Richard Upjohn and John Notman) who delivered the consecration sermon, noting that "This building in its strong simplicity stands as a practical application of the Master's words."<sup>7</sup>

The somewhat solemn exterior of St. Mary's barely hints at the splendor revealed inside (Figure 4) which makes this church one of Vaughan's most powerful works. As at St. Andrew's, decoration is limited

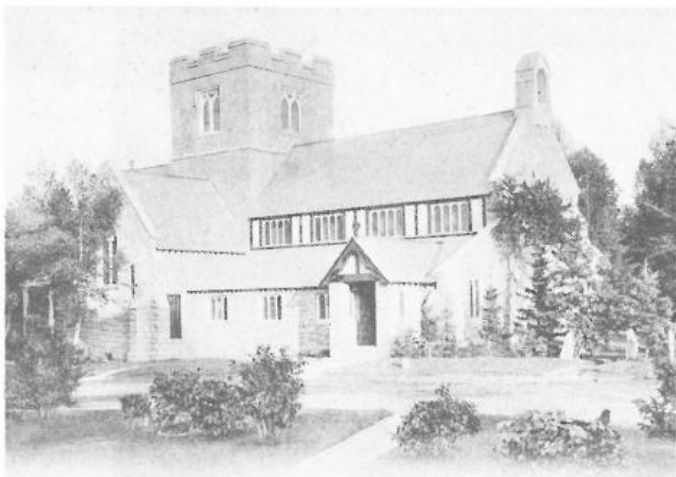


Figure 3. St. Mary's Church, Northeast Harbor, c. 1905  
Postcard view (MHPC).

primarily to constructional elements: a Decorated east window, pale yellow walls, and a paneled wood chancel ceiling (painted blue with gold stars), all reminiscent of Bodley at his Arts and Crafts best. But it is the nave — spanned by an intricate hammer-beamed ceiling, recalling the great trussed halls of the Tudor period — which is so arresting.

Vaughan had another patron besides the Episcopal Church: the eccentric millionaire Edward F. Searles. Born the son of a poor farmer in Methuen, Massachusetts, Searles gave music lessons in Bath and Gardiner, Maine around 1860 and eventually became a decorator with Herter Brothers. It was through his work for that prestigious New York firm that he met and married the widow of Southern Pacific Railroad magnate Mark Hopkins. Following his marriage to Mrs. Hopkins in 1887, and especially after her death four years later, Searles built a number of mansions, schools, an organ hall, and even two castles, many of which were in his native Methuen and all of which were designed by Vaughan.

However, Mrs. Searles' legacy to her young husband (she was twenty-one years his senior) of a quarter share in the Southern Pacific and property valued at over \$20 million did not go unchallenged, for her adopted son contested the will. In a highly publicized trial, Searles' inheritance was successfully defended by General Thomas Hubbard, a Bowdoin College trustee and son of a former Maine governor. As payment for his services, Hubbard suggested that Searles donate a science building to the General's alma mater in Brunswick.

The result was the Mary Frances Searles Science Building, completed in 1894 (Figure 5). This large, brick, three-story structure, with its U-shaped plan, towers, cupola, and Flemish gables, is one of the earliest revivals of the Jacobean style in this country. Its sources, however, are found less in the early 17th Century than in Bodley's collegiate work, such as the Master's House at University College, Oxford of 1879.

Vaughan also designed two other buildings at Bowdoin, and both were donated by General Hubbard. The more important of these is the Hubbard Library, completed in 1903 (Figure 6). The library cost almost \$300,000, but Hubbard had specified that it "be constructed to please the eye" and without regard to cost.<sup>8</sup> Vaughan described this T-shaped, red brick, Indiana limestone, and Maine granite building as "17th century Gothic...the last stage of the Gothic in England... Many of the buildings of Oxford and Cambridge are in this composite style."<sup>9</sup> Here again, the inspiration for this American college building can be found in Bodley's work before Vaughan left his employ, in this case, St. Swithun's Quadrangle at Magdalen College, Oxford of 1880. Critic Montgomery Schuyler referred to Hubbard as "a dignified, scholarly and appropriate performance that does not



Figure 4. St. Mary's Church, Interior view (Photo John Eddy).





Figure 5. Mary F. Searles Science Building, Bowdoin College, Brunswick (Photo Estate of Doris Russell Foote).



Figure 6. Hubbard Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, c. 1905 view (MHPC).

misbecome the traditions of Magdalen and Merton."<sup>10</sup> Just as Vaughan's nearby St. Andrew's seemed felicitously suited to late 19th-century New England in spite of its very Englishness, Searles and Hubbard Halls are quite at home in their American setting, complementing Richard Upjohn's Romanesque chapel and Charles McKim's Renaissance art museum.

During the construction of the library, Vaughan also built the Hubbard Grand Stand. While an unusual task for Vaughan, the steel-framed stadium demonstrates the architect's ability to design utilitarian structures that are as visually successful as his more historical works.

Vaughan's other Maine work was done during the construction of St. Andrew's, and this was the house he designed for the Gliddens in Newcastle, not far from the church and magnificently sited overlooking the Damariscotta River (Figure 7). "Gladisfen" is unusual in that it is not only one of Vaughan's rare domestic compositions, but it is an early example of the Georgian Revival. While the main facade of the house certainly seems to have been modeled on the 1759 Vassall-Longfellow House in Cambridge (perhaps at Glidden's request), the dwelling's interior spaces and decoration are decidedly English Palladian, serving as a reminder that no matter what

Vaughan designed, it was always as if he were an English architect who just happened to be in America.

As the architect who introduced Bodley's refined Gothicism to his country, Vaughan is clearly an anomaly, hardly the sort of figure who attracted disciples. Yet by 1906, his standing was such that he — along with his mentor Bodley — was commissioned to build the National Cathedral in Washington. Although death from lung cancer in 1917 robbed him of the opportunity to complete that huge church, the dramatic chancel is his work and he is buried beneath it.

Vaughan's work never strayed far from his reliance on Bodley, and thus lacked normal evolutionary artistic development. It could be argued that the plans for Washington Cathedral, along with the probable offer to finish the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York in 1911, represent the climax of his career as an ecclesiastical designer. Rather, it is Henry Vaughan's parish churches, like St. Andrew's, Newcastle, and St. Mary's, Northeast Harbor, as well as his collegiate buildings like Searles and Hubbard Halls, that stand out as his finest monuments.

William Morgan  
University of Louisville  
September, 1984



Figure 7. "Gladisfen," Newcastle, c. 1895 view (MHPC).

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Henry Vaughan, "The Late George Frederick Bodley," *Architectural Review*, Vol. 14, 1907, p. 213.
- <sup>2</sup> Susanna Coggeshall, in her "A Brief History of St. Andrew's Parish in Newcastle, Maine" (unpublished manuscript, 1980, p. 3), states that Glidden may have met Vaughan in England, perhaps through the American painter John LaFarge.
- <sup>3</sup> "Consecration of St. Andrew's Church, Newcastle," *The North East*, December 1883, p. 45. Vaughan originally planned a rood screen for St. Andrew's.
- <sup>4</sup> The pulpit and altar rail are described in *North East*, June 1886, p. 90. George Wolfe Shinn, in *King's Handbook of Notable Episcopal Churches in the United States* (Boston: 1889, p. 252), describes the Portland work as representative of the "Ambo desk of the Primitive Church"; a likely medieval source is the pulpit at St. Alban's Cathedral.
- <sup>5</sup> *North East*, February 1887, p. 63.
- <sup>6</sup> *North East*, October 1894, p. 26.
- <sup>7</sup> *North East*, September 1902, p. 20.
- <sup>8</sup> Charles T. Burnett, *Hyde of Bowdoin: A Biography of William De Witt Hyde*, Boston: 1931, p. 168. "I have specified everything to be of the very best" (letter from Vaughan to Professor Little, May 8, 1901, Bowdoin College, Special Collections).
- <sup>9</sup> Vaughan to Little, November 1, 1901 (Bowdoin College, Special Collections).
- <sup>10</sup> Montgomery Schuyler, "Architecture of American Colleges," *Architectural Record*, Vol. XXIX, February 1911, p. 156.

## SOURCES

The material upon which this article is based is derived from the monograph, *The Almighty Wall: The Architecture of Henry Vaughan*, New York and Cambridge, Mass.: 1983, by the author.

### LIST OF KNOWN COMMISSIONS IN MAINE BY HENRY VAUGHAN

St. Andrew's Church, Newcastle, 1883, Extant.  
 "Gladisfen" (John Glidden House), Newcastle, c. 1883, Extant.  
 Pulpit, chancel rail, St. Luke's Cathedral, Portland, 1885-86, Extant.  
 Chancel painting, St. Luke's Cathedral, Portland, 1887, Destroyed.  
 Stable for "Gladisfen," Newcastle, 1892, Extant.  
 St. James Church, Old Town, 1892-94, Extant.  
 Mary Frances Searles Science Building, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, 1894, Extant.  
 St. Mary's-by-the-Sea Church, Northeast Harbor, 1902, Extant.  
 Hubbard Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, 1902-03, Extant.  
 Hubbard Grand Stand, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, 1903, Extant.

Photograph of Henry Vaughan  
 Courtesy of the Episcopal Diocese  
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